

Ruggedized MC4

Accessing information on the battlefield is vital for the treatment and care of wounded individuals, but with wind storms, mud, sand, dust, rain and high temperatures, technology protection is critical. OtterBox, a leader in rugged case technology, developed the OtterBox 1900 PDA case for such environments. Working with the Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care (MC4) and the Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center, a subordinate element of U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, OtterBox Products developed the OtterBox 1900 case for the iPAQ PDA.

MC4 loads all necessary medical information management software onto an HP iPAQ hx4700, stores it in the 1900 and ships it to Army medical units throughout Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Afghanistan. The iPAQ software, Battlefield Medical Information System Tactical-Joint (BMIST-J), allows Army tactical medical forces to quickly and securely document patient information at the point of injury, contributing to a soldier's comprehensive, life-long electronic medical record.

The advantage is that instead of purchasing a rugged PDA device costing \$1,500 or more, MC4 pays for a standard HP iPAQ hx4700 (\$500-600) and the OtterBox 1900 (\$100), saving around \$1,000 per unit. The casing solution adds longevity and durability to iPAQs and BMIST-J software that is subjected to variable field conditions, and ensures information is safe at all times. It eliminates the need for loose patient medical files and time spent researching records. The solution increases efficiency by providing a rugged device with necessary information to treat soldiers on the spot.

To date, MC4 has deployed more than 12,000 OtterBox and BMIST-J systems—the majority of which are handhelds—to more than 250 medical units throughout Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Afghanistan. The iPAQ also synchronizes with MC4 laptops to record and share real-time medical information.

